

**CAMDEN PLANNING BOARD  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
NOVEMBER 3, 2011**

**PRESENT:** Chair Chris MacLean; Members Richard Householder, Jan MacKinnon, Kerry Sabanty and; Alternate Members Nancy McConnell and Sid Lindsley; Don White, Select Board Liaison to the Planning Board; and CEO Steve Wilson

**ABSENT:** Member Lowrie Sargent

The Meeting was called to order at 5:00 pm in the Camden Fire Station Meeting Room

**1. PUBLIC COMMENT on NON-AGENDA ITEMS:**

No one came forward to speak.

**2. MINUTES**

September 15, 2011:

The Recording Secretary now has a working DVD to prepare the minutes of the September 15, 2011 meeting.

October 26, 2011:

These minutes will be reviewed at the next meeting of the Board.

**3. ESTABLISHING A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN SUB-COMMITTEE:  
RECOMMENDATION TO SELECT BOARD**

The Chair announced that the Planning Board is going before the Select Board to request permission to create a Comprehensive Plan Sub-committee. Mr. Householder asked Mr. Wilson if he had found out when the revised Plan was due. Mr. Wilson replied the revised ten-year plan was due in 2014. Ms. MacKinnon had mentioned this sub-committee to former member Deb Dodge; both Ms. Dodge and another former Comp Plan writer seemed to be saying that they had taken their turn, it was a lot of work, and it is up to new folks to take the revision forward. Mr. Wilson added that he does not believe that the Plan has to be re-written, just updated where necessary; it may not be that big a project this time around.

Mr. Householder asked Mr. Wilson if he had spoken to Town Attorney Kelly about the Planning Board being involved in the Comp Plan process. Mr. Wilson replied that he had, and reports that Mr. Kelly wanted the Board to be aware of the possibility there *might* be a perception that there is too much involvement by one group of people when the Planning Board writes the Plan, and is also the Board that writes and interprets Ordinances based on that Plan. When there is not enough separation, it can be seen as an attempt to direct and influence the end results; the Board might want to keep this thought in mind.

Ms. MacKinnon wonders if a couple of members of the Planning Board should go before the Select Board and inform them that the Plan needs to be updated to reflect changes that have occurred since 2004, and ask them to appoint a Committee to do that work. The Chair wanted to

1 better understand Mr. Kelly's concerns because it does not make legal sense to him that the  
2 Planning Board cannot be involved in the writing of the Comp Plan. They also draft the  
3 Ordinances that must go before the public and the Select Board and then the Town for a vote.  
4 The same thing would happen with the Comprehensive Plan which also must go to Town vote.  
5 In addition, given the case law recently, the Comp Plan is to be seen only as a guiding principle  
6 and not as a legal authority. Mr. Wilson replied that he believes that the concern is a matter of  
7 perception, and not a legal issue. Mr. MacLean replied that he remains convinced that the  
8 Planning Board should be in charge of this effort, perhaps with fewer Planning Board members  
9 sitting on the Comp Plan Committee, but still the driving force. He also wants to keep a  
10 methodical and historical record of the procedures followed throughout the process so the next  
11 group won't have to re-invent the wheel. He asked Mr. White if he thought there might be funds  
12 for a Recording Secretary to ensure that record is there, and Mr. White suggested asking the  
13 Select Board for funds. The formation of this Committee is not a unique situation, and it would  
14 not be unusual to request funding to cover expenses. Mr. White believes that this would be a full  
15 committee, not a sub-committee of the Planning Board; he is not aware of any push back about  
16 the Planning Board doing the Comprehensive Plan.

17  
18 Mr. MacLean suggests that the Comp Plan Committee should have no fewer than seven  
19 members and might be made up of 3 Planning Board members and 4 other members, with  
20 perhaps 2 additional members to serve as alternates – but no more than ten members in all. Mr.  
21 Householder, Mr. Sargent and Mr. Lindsley have expressed interest in serving as regular  
22 members, and Ms. MacKinnon and Mr. Sabanty agreed to serve as their Alternates. The Chair  
23 will make a presentation of the concept to the Select Board at their next meeting on November  
24 16<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Wilson referenced the Maine Statute enabling Planning Commissions: M.R.S.A. 30-A  
25 §4324 2.A. gives the Select Board the authority to establish the committee. Mr. MacLean will  
26 explain that there are two membership issues: who sits on the Commission and who, from the  
27 community, will be asked to help draft different parts of the Plan. They want to make sure that  
28 someone from the Harbor Committee and someone from the Down Town Business Group is  
29 involved, as well as others representing special interests in Town. The names of Susan Snead,  
30 Jim Elliott, Linda Norton, and Peter Gross were suggested for possible Commission members.  
31 Development Director, Brian Hodges, has offered to consult.

32  
33 → Ms. MacKinnon asked Mr. Wilson if Mr. Hodges would be willing to go through the Plan and  
34 offer his comments; Mr. Wilson will ask.

35  
36 Mr. Householder and Mr. MacLean will attend the Select Board meeting to make the  
37 presentation.

#### 38 39 **4. DOWN TOWN BUSINESS GROUP: SIGNAGE DISCUSSION**

40  
41 The Down Town Business Group (DTBG) has asked two members of the Executive  
42 Committee, Meg Quijano and Bernice Berger, to attend this meeting as their official  
43 representatives for the signage discussion. The Chair recounted the recent history of this Board  
44 with business signage issues including the directional signage that everyone agrees is ineffective,  
45 the long history of complaints that the Sign Ordinance does not address the needs of businesses  
46 and the fact that the Ordinance is not enforced. The Board wants to work more closely from the  
47 outset with the business community, taking into consideration the needs of the community at  
48 large, and tailoring their work to three areas:

1 1. Business Signage: Business signs large enough so they are effective; flexibility in  
2 determining the number of signs permitted; permitting more off-site signage for individual  
3 businesses.

4  
5 2. Directional Signage: Rework the Town's directional signs so they are effective in  
6 moving people locally as well as to outlying areas of Town.

7  
8 3. Permit the installation of State directional signs.  
9

10 The Board has heard from members of the DTBG that changes are needed regarding the  
11 signs individual businesses are able to use on their own property, and/or there needs to be a  
12 liberalization of the controls over off-site signage. Mr. MacLean informed the group that if the  
13 changes to the Ordinance are to be ready for next summer, they will have to be ready to be heard  
14 by the public and the Select Board by March.  
15

16 Ms. Quijano reported that the DTBG had met this morning and wants the Board to know that  
17 they appreciate this invitation to be involved. Members of the DTBG really don't know the  
18 Ordinance, or what changes can be made, so they have no concrete suggestions this evening.  
19 The question will be whether the Townspeople want any changes and, if they do, what is it that  
20 they want to see. Mr. MacLean asked Mr. Wilson to see that members of the DTBG who want a  
21 copy of the Ordinance get one.  
22

23 Ms. MacKinnon informed the Board that the Board's Sign Working Group made many  
24 changes to improve the Sign Ordinance two years ago, and they realized at the time that there  
25 was still much to be done; this meeting is the start of the effort to make that second round of  
26 changes.  
27

28 Ms. Quijano noted that the group working on the Downtown Master Plan should have input  
29 to offer as well. She hopes the Planning Board is involved in the Plan as well; the DTBG is  
30 anxious to hear what has worked in other places – and what has not - from the folks leading the  
31 effort. One of the DTBG members, Sue Michaud, has been working on a prototype for the  
32 signpost directional signs that she spoke with the Board about previously, and they have one of  
33 those individual signs with them this evening. The concept is modeled after the private signs on  
34 Sharp's wharf, and the DTBG believes that this model is very tasteful, and it addresses the  
35 historic nature of the downtown in shape and color. The DTBG is looking for uniformity in  
36 design to make all signage more effective in moving people to specific places; they are  
37 constantly asked where else there are shops in Town, and take their time to direct people to  
38 Bayview Street or the Mill. At this time, they imagine the signs mounted on signposts, as well as  
39 on the sides of buildings like the current directional signs, and they are actively speaking to  
40 building owners about permission to install some of these signs. What they are looking for are  
41 signs providing clear directions to walkers, not to drivers, so their signs are much smaller. The  
42 DTBG plans on paying for the initial sign posts, with businesses paying for their individual  
43 signs. They will start with Bayview Street first and then try the River District. Businesses want  
44 the Town to buy in to this concept and support the concept of official business signage.  
45

46 As for the Town's directional signage, the group does not like them – not just the color which  
47 everyone realizes is wrong, but the overall design. The use of the international symbols is  
48 offensive to many; they are too generic, and too commonly used and they believe there has to be

1 a better way to convey the unique offerings in Town. Some of those symbols, like the one for  
2 Parking, are good to have, but if there were fewer symbols on the signs, they could be larger and  
3 the signs more effective. Better directional signage will help the side street businesses, but a  
4 common color scheme and design for all the signs is important to the overall effectiveness of the  
5 project.

6  
7 Ms. MacKinnon asked if there were any way to incorporate these ideas into the existing Sign  
8 Ordinance so the changes could be made right away. Mr. Householder noted the problems the  
9 original Sign Group had in finding places to locate these signs; private businesses, as well as the  
10 Select Board, turned down the group's first choices for locations they thought would be most  
11 advantageous – like the perfect spot on the Village Green for a sign directing drivers to the River  
12 Business District and Parking. In addition, they had difficulty with the Select Board not wanting  
13 more signage in Town, especially signs that “stood out”; the current color scheme was the result.  
14 They hope that those barriers are gone with the current Select Board that is now in place. The  
15 DTBG thinks the current directional sign concept can be made to mesh with their design and  
16 concept – the signs don't have to match, but they should complement each other.

17  
18 Mr. Wilson reiterated his belief that there was a way, if the Town owned these sign posts and  
19 signs, even if they were paid for by businesses and donated to the Town, that they would be  
20 permitted without an Ordinance change. He wonders if the signs could be mounted on the  
21 lampposts; since those are Town property there would be no question with DOT rights-of-way,  
22 etc. Mr. Wilson is sure that Town signs are exempted from the Ordinance, but agreed that the  
23 problem is that these signs are directing people to private property. There will be need for those  
24 signs on private property to be permitted under the Ordinance.

25  
26 → The CEO was asked to get a legal opinion from the Town Attorney regarding this concept.

27  
28 Leonard Lookner was here to comment as a concerned citizen:

29 He urged the Board not to permit more signage. He and his partner have been in business for  
30 33 years at the same location on Bayview Street, and they have always prospered even though  
31 getting drivers to their location is difficult. Many other restaurants, especially those on Main  
32 Street that are very visible, have come and gone in the meantime. It is not so much what is on a  
33 sign directing people to a business that means success, as it is what is going on inside that  
34 business; more signs are not going to guarantee businesses will be successful, just that there will  
35 be more signs. He is not sure if it is more important to protect these businesses or protect the  
36 character of the Town and not clutter it with signs everywhere.

37  
38 Mr. Lookner noted that one reason shops on Bayview Street may be having problems is  
39 related to one single action by the Planning Board when they allowed offices on the first floor in  
40 the Harbor Business District. As an example he noted that the former Unique One has a living  
41 room at street level at Bayview; people see that and think there are no more shops down that  
42 street. There are other offices along the street as well, and that one change may be more  
43 detrimental to getting people down Bayview Street than anything else. He would like to see it  
44 changed back. Mr. MacLean reminded Mr. Lookner that building owners asked for the change so  
45 they could attract a broader range of renters and maybe keep businesses year-round instead of  
46 just seasonal shops. They said they needed to be able to attract a broader mix of businesses and  
47 allowing more business uses would give them more opportunities to find renters. Mr. Lookner

1 replied that something is not working because Bayview Street had more businesses thirty years  
2 ago than it does now, so this is evidently not the answer.

3  
4 Mr. Dickey informed the Board how much staff time is spent giving people directions. This  
5 was supported by Ms. Quijano and Ms. Berger as well; they all spend a lot of time, and wages  
6 giving tourists directions hoping to keep business in Town. They should be able to simply say:  
7 “Go left down the street to the corner and follow the sign to so and so.” That would take one  
8 minute and be easy on everybody concerned. Mr. Lookner added that he is not opposed to all  
9 directional signs, but he is opposed to some of the other business signage that has been proposed  
10 in the past – things like sandwich boards cheapen the whole experience of being in Town.

11  
12 Mr. MacLean announced that the Planning Board was going to the Select Board for  
13 permission to revitalize the Sign Working Group, and said that Ms. MacKinnon and Mr.  
14 Householder were willing to serve again. Mr. Dickey asked that different Board members be  
15 appointed instead – the project needs fresh eyes. Ms. MacKinnon noted that there will be many  
16 fresh eyes coming from the members of the DTBG – Sue Michaud, Bernice Berger and Meg  
17 Quijano - who are willing to serve; Mr. Dickey expressed his interest in serving again as well.  
18 Ms. Quijano mentioned again that the Downtown Planning Group will also be a source of  
19 information new ideas and options and they should be incorporated into the process somehow.  
20 Ms. Michaud will attend the Select Board meeting and bring the proto-type signage.

21  
22 Ms. Quijano raised the subject of “Open” flags; flag signage is not permitted in Camden if it  
23 has words or pictures conveying what is being sold, or if it says “Open”. Last winter the  
24 merchants in Town who stayed open flew identical blue flags with white snowflakes to draw  
25 attention to their stores; they would like the ability to fly the same style flags – very tasteful –  
26 that say “Open” on them just for the winter season – January through April perhaps. Ms.  
27 MacKinnon expressed her opinion that something that limited may be acceptable to voters.

28  
29 Mr. Sabanty left the meeting at this point.

## 30 31 **5. CONSERVATION COMMISSION: RECOMMENDATION TO SELECT BOARD**

32  
33 The Planning Board has asked the Select Board to hear and discuss the recommendation  
34 regarding the relationship between the Conservation Commission and the Planning Board at their  
35 meeting on November 16<sup>th</sup>. Mr. White suggested to members of the Conservation Commission  
36 in attendance (Bob Gassett, Doug Johnson and Carla Ferguson) that they contact the Town  
37 Office and asked to be placed on the agenda for the 16<sup>th</sup> so they can finally be appointed and  
38 move forward with their work. A draft of the Planning Board’s recommendation had been made  
39 available for Board members to review. Mr. Sargent had prepared comments which will be  
40 incorporated into the draft in they are not already addressed (copy attached).

41  
42 Ms. MacKinnon noted how helpful the Conservation Commission’s comments had been  
43 during the review of the Ragged Mountain project. She asked if they were happy with the way  
44 things are going out there now. Mr. Gassett replied that the contractors saved nearly every single  
45 tree the Commission had tagged for that purpose, and they were very pleased with the  
46 cooperative attitude. Mr. Johnson said they took off a whole lower loop of the trail which was  
47 going to come close to the Strout/Klein property line and re-routed away from this area. They  
48 also avoided a stand of trees uphill from this property that Ms. Klein thought had been important

1 to save. In re-routing the switchback, one large old oak was lost, but all those that would have  
2 been impacted in the lower area were saved. The trail has been completed – at least all the  
3 construction equipment is gone, but there are “Keep Out” signs keeping people out of the area  
4 until the soils are stabilized – probably not until the trails are opened for skiers. Ms. McConnel  
5 mentioned that she had heard from a friend, who lives in the area, that people in the  
6 neighborhood don’t understand what is going on and think it is secretive and suspicious. She  
7 wondered if word could be gotten out about what is happening and when the trails might be  
8 available. It was suggested that Mr. Gassett might want to get something in the paper about what  
9 the Commission did there and what is going to be happening. He already has an article planned  
10 with pictures of their work there. The idea is to help make the public aware of the Commission’s  
11 work and provide information to the public.

12  
13 Mr. Householder’s comments were read into the record: He recommends: (1) that the Town  
14 Tree Warden be an active member of the Commission; (2) the duties of the Commission should  
15 be limited to Town-owned land and not to “all local land areas”; and (3) keeping an index of all  
16 open areas of the Town infringes upon property privately owned – what private property owners  
17 do with their land is their business and not the business of the Commission.

18  
19 Mr. Johnson notified the Board that they have already completed the index and a map. The  
20 Commission’s discussion regarding Mr. Householder’s suggestion that the Tree Warden be part  
21 of the Commission led to the discovery that Mr. Wood receives a stipend for his service, and,  
22 therefore is not able to serve as a Commission member. He is still willing to advise the members  
23 who find that his original goals for the Commission, drafted in 1992, are still right on target. One  
24 of these goals, to act as an advisory source on environmental and conservation issues that may  
25 affect the Town, is germane to this discussion. Ms. MacKinnon’s personal opinion is that she has  
26 no problem with the Commission serving in an advisory capacity like they did for the Snow  
27 Bowl project – it was actually very helpful. And, if private property owners are interested in  
28 hearing what the Commission might have to say, she doesn’t see why the Commission can’t be  
29 available for consulting purposes: what they offer is not binding, but they are a knowledgeable  
30 source of information. Mr. MacLean said that it is important to include in the Board’s  
31 recommendation, that some members believe that the Commission could infringe on private  
32 property rights, but their mission is fairly limited and Commission members are sensitive to  
33 those private property rights. Commission members have offered to be available to private  
34 property owners, upon request, for consultation purposes.

35  
36 Mr. Wilson is concerned that the Commission is not working on the River Walk, but Mr.  
37 Gassett informed him that the Commission initiated the formation of the River Walk Coalition  
38 which includes one member of the Conservation Commission. All of the members participate in  
39 clean-up days, work on grant application, etc., but this is totally a River Walk Coalition project,  
40 and they are leaving all the decisions to them.

41  
42 Mr. Johnson referred to Mr. Sargent’s reference to the work undone from the Comprehensive  
43 Plan goals regarding tax incentives, and hopes that they can pursue this issue together.

#### 44 45 **DISCUSSION:**

46  
47 1. *Minor Field Adjustments:* There were none  
48

1 2. *Discussion of Driveways and Private Ways:* The Board wants to look one more time at the  
2 changes recommended by Mr. Wilson and the Town Attorney intended to clear up holes in the  
3 two definitions that let some long driveways slip through review when this review was the  
4 original intention of the Ordinance.

5  
6 3. *Traffic Recommendations to Select Board regarding Route 105 Speed Limits*

7 The draft prepared for the Board for submission to the Select Board for consideration at their  
8 November 16<sup>th</sup> meeting was discussed and approved.

9  
10 4. *Future Agenda Items, Discussion Issues, and Ideas:*

11  
12 5. *Pending Applications:* Not discussed

13  
14 6. *MUBEC changes:* Tabled

15  
16 There being no further business before the Board they adjourned at 7:00 pm.

17  
18 Respectfully submitted,  
19 Jeanne Hollingsworth,  
20 Recording Secretary  
21